United Nations

Daily Highlights

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TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- President Aristide says he will return to Haiti in 11 days thanks, to efforts of international community; United Republic of Tanzania, Andorra, Pakistan, Jordan, Indonesia and Georgia also speak in General Assembly's general debate.

- ICFY Mission says Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) has closed its border with Serb-controlled areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

- Cuba says developing world's problems will not be solved by invasions or allegedly humanitarian military operations; Tunisia, Australia, Czech Republic, Kuwait, Gabon, Kenya and Mozambique among other speakers in general debate yesterday.

- Thirty-member group leaves New York to join UNMIH advance team in Haiti tomorrow.

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President Jean-Bertrand Aristide of Haiti today thanked Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali and the international community for supporting the Haitian people over the last three years. He also expressed his gratitude to President Bill Clinton and to the United States, Canada, France, Venezuela, Argentina and all the countries which had worked for implementation of Security Council resolution 940 (1994) and the Governors Island Agreement. Because of their efforts, he would be returning to Haiti in 11 days, he told the General Assembly.

The Haitian people would never give up their struggle for a socially just, economically free and politically independent country, the President continued. Today, Haiti was marching resolutely and definitively towards the establishment of a democratic society. The message was yes to reconciliation and justice, and no to violence, vengeance and impunity. However, acts of violence against the Haitian people were continuing notwithstanding the presence of the multinational force. Disarmament of paramilitary groups was indispensable for peace, he stressed. In order to create a stable environment,

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it was necessary to professionalize the armed forces and to establish a separate police force. Haiti would also have to tackle major social and economic problems through literacy, health and other programmes.

President Ali Hassan Mwinyi of the United Republic of Tanzania told the General Assembly today that the collective security system envisaged in the United Nations Charter had not always worked to the satisfaction of Member States. That was because some of them had been reluctant to implement both the letter and the spirit of the Charter. It was now time to make the United Nations and all its organs more representative and more democratic. It was hypocritical that some Members should preach democracy to the rest of the world and yet not accept the full democratization of the United Nations system.

Tanzania was deeply involved in the search for peace and reconciliation in the neighbouring countries of Rwanda and Burundi, he went on to say. In Rwanda, after the worst carnage in African history, the Rwandese Patriotic Front had established a fairly broad-based government of national unity. The country needed to return to normalcy as soon as possible with the return of a substantial proportion of refugees. It was extremely important to stem the tide of refugees and to encourage their repatriation, and the new Government required international support to do that. The current situation must not be allowed to become permanent, as that would create an environment conducive to the political and even military mobilization of the refugees. He expressed gratitude to the United Nations and the international community for their assistance in providing relief to the Rwandese refugees in Tanzania, but added that the relief work was far from over.

Oscar Ribas Reig, Prime Minister of Andorra, stressed the importance of respecting and preserving the identities of micro-States. As democracy consisted of governance by the majority with respect for the minority, international politics must be compatible with the recognition of micro-States without discrimination. While they had clear limitations, such States had qualities that humanity could not do without, especially when many processes of peace and reconciliation had not been resolved. Micro-States possessed the values of respect for diversity and mutual harmony. Because of their small size, they had learned that solutions could not be imposed and that the sources of difference could not be abolished.

He called on the great Powers to put themselves in the place of those who possessed neither military power nor human and economic resources, and to realize that a different approach to problems might guarantee more successful outcomes. Such an alternative approach was based on the strictest respect for the identity of others, their collective personality and their cultures. In a world becoming more interdependent and more globalized, micro-States, although small, were not superfluous. Such States could make useful contributions and serve as points of reference in many cases.

Pakistan's Foreign Minister, Sardar Aseff Ahmad Ali, said Islamic countries were appalled at the Security Council's recent decision to ease sanctions against Belgrade -- the root cause of the aggression against Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Bosnians must be allowed to exercise their right to

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self-defence. Pakistan supported the demand for the immediate lifting of the arms embargo against Bosnia and Herzegovina. He regretted that some countries had threatened to withdraw their troops from the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) if the embargo were lifted. Islamic States would be ready to contribute troops to compensate for any shortfall created by such withdrawals.

He went on to say that the struggle of the Kashmiri people was just and legitimate. They had been promised by the Security Council and by India and Pakistan that they would decide on their future in a United Nations-supervised plebiscite. However, India had refused to implement the Council resolutions, and was guilty of daily and systematic acts of terrorism against Kashmiris. He proposed that the United Nations Military Observer Group for India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) be substantially enlarged. It should also be allowed to perform its mandate of patrolling both sides of the line of control. India should take genuine steps to halt its repression and lift the emergency laws operative in Kashmir. A final settlement of the dispute would have to be based on the wishes of the Kashmiri people. Pakistan was prepared for talks with India on Kashmir. A settlement would enhance the prospects of conventional arms control and non-proliferation in South Asia.

Crown Prince El Hassan bin Talal of Jordan said a historic opportunity to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict existed, along with a possibility of forging a commonwealth of peace, hope and participation for all. The question of Palestine had been Jordan's main concern. Jordan had received successive waves of refugees and returnees at a huge cost, but remained committed to democratization and the protection of civil liberties and human rights. After years of working for peace, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was negotiating directly with Israel.

On the Jordanian-Israeli track, the Common Agenda had paved the way for agreement on issues such as water, the environment, energy, territory and security, he said. The historic Washington Declaration ending the state of war between Jordan and Israel had been signed in July. Jordan and Israel were engaged in substantive talks, seeking just and mutually agreeable solutions to outstanding issues. However, Jordan still aimed for a comprehensive peace. Many issues being addressed defied the confines of bilateralism and required regional and international participation. One such issue concerned Jerusalem's spiritual significance. For believers in the three great monotheistic faiths, the city must be the ultimate symbol of peace and its glorious manifestation. A final settlement on the political and administrative status of Jerusalem would occur in negotiations between Palestinians and Israelis. Any arrangement reached must serve the needs of the millions of followers of Islam, Christianity and Judaism.

Indonesia's Foreign Minister, Ali Alatas, said the process of reforming the United Nations system should take into account the representation of Member States at all levels and their participation in the decision-making process. Indonesia supported the proposal to enlarge the permanent membership of the Security Council. While the principle of geographic representation was important, it should not be the only criterion to determine eligibility for new permanent members. Other objective criteria were equally important, such

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as political, economic and demographic realities and a country's capability and record of contributing to the promotion of peace, security and economic development.

He found no particular merit in the proposal for the establishment of an economic security council. It was more important to strengthen the Economic and Social Council, as well as United Nations coordination with the Bretton Woods institutions. A new partnership for development must be forged, involving all nations. As Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement, Indonesia had given the highest priority to resolving the debt crisis. The Indonesian President had sent a memorandum on the subject to the Chairmen of the Group of Seven on the eve of their Tokyo Summit last year, to which the Group had responded positively. A ministerial meeting of non-aligned countries had called on the international community to adopt a common set of principles for future debt negotiations.

Georgian Foreign Minister Alexander Chikvaidze noted that many of the newly independent States, including his own, were "hot spots". On the issue of Georgia's Abkhazia region alone, nine Security Council resolutions had been adopted, numerous missions had been dispatched and the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) had been extended. However, that had not been sufficient. Clear decisions and bold actions were expected from the United Nations and the Member States. The conflict had not been resolved after more than a year, and almost 300,000 displaced persons were still unable to return to their homes to resume their lives.

The Abkhazian conflict was an attempt by forces of aggressive separatism, bolstered by external support, to wrest a piece of territory from a sovereign State and create a dictatorship, he said. For the first time, the majority of a country's population had been displaced in its own land. The Georgian Government had been negotiating with the separatists in good faith, but agreements for the return of displaced persons and a settlement of the conflict had been ignored. Frustrated in its hopes for a United Nations peace-keeping operation in Abkhazia, the Government of Georgia had appealed to the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), and a CIS peace-keeping force was deployed in the zone of conflict. While its presence was beneficial, it could be more active and proceed beyond disengaging the parties. Georgia would never accept the loss of any part of its territory, he stressed.

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The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) is meeting its commitment to close its border with areas of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina controlled by Bosnian Serb forces, according to a report by the Co-Chairmen of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia (ICFY). That conclusion was based on observations by the International Conference's Mission to the Federal Republic, on the advice of Mission Coordinator Bo Pellnäs, and in the absence of any contrary information. The report was transmitted by the Secretary-General to the President of the Security Council in a letter dated 3 October.

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Last week, in resolution 943 (1994), the Council said it would suspend certain economic sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) for an initial 100 days if the border between that country and Bosnia and Herzegovina were closed.

As of yesterday, the International Conference's Mission had 93 international members deployed in the Federal Republic, with 36 teams operating from four centres. They visited all parts of the border between the Federal Republic and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and covered all significant road crossings by day and night. The Mission expects to have 105 personnel deployed by the middle of this week.

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Cuban Foreign Minister Roberto Robaina Gonzalez told the General Assembly yesterday that while the general debate was going on, a small and impoverished Caribbean nation was being militarily occupied. The deal with the generals in Haiti ignored the decisions of the international community and the will of the Haitian people. The fundamental principles of the Charter and the authority of the United Nations were among the victims of that deal. Cuba had always supported efforts to restore constitutional order in Haiti, and rejected any resort to foreign intervention to resolve the conflict.

The problems of the developing world could not be resolved with invasions nor with allegedly humanitarian military operations, he stated. Neither could they be resolved with emergency aid programmes to mitigate the worst consequences of structural underdevelopment. If the United Nations did not adopt measures to develop the third world, the General Assembly would soon be debating the arrival of underdevelopment in the first world. The right to development was being subordinated to the interests of the large economic powers, which dictated the rules of international economic relations. He went on to note that the Assembly had twice demanded an end to the economic blockade imposed on Cuba by the United States. While pretending to be a free and democratic country, the United States was attempting to deny Cuba its place as a sovereign nation. While there had been bilateral meetings between the two countries, Cuba would never allow its sovereignty, independence and socialism to be bargaining chips on any negotiating table.

Tunisia's Foreign Minister, Habib Ben Yahia, told the General Assembly yesterday that for the first time, a pluralist parliament had been elected in his country. Tunisia had made efforts to strengthen ties with countries in the Arab Maghreb Union, the Persian Gulf and elsewhere. It had also hosted the summit meeting of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). As acting Chairman of the OAU, Tunisia could focus attention on the situation in Africa. The causes of the continent's problems must be identified and a path to aid developed.

At an OAU summit in Cairo this year, African States had established a mechanism for the prevention and settlement of disputes, he continued. The United Nations had a responsibility to assist that mechanism by providing the necessary funds. Tunisia had worked to intensify emergency assistance to

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Rwanda. African States had shown their readiness to send troops to Rwanda, and there must be no delay in supplying material and logistical support to the mission there. Africa had also been cooperating at the economic level, and Tunisia had called on the Group of Seven to become involved within a global strategy of North-South cooperation. The increase in African debt service, along with the deterioration of trade, hampered development. The importance of economic assistance to African countries must be highlighted.

Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans said the United Nations role in the economic, social and humanitarian fields had been overshadowed by the public image of an organization failing to meet its responsibilities and unequal to the challenges. Some of that imagery was deeply unfair, as the United Nations could do no more than its Member States allowed it to do. The underlying reality was that the Organization had not developed a clear and confident sense of its role.

Peace, security and development were indissolubly linked, he continued. The United Nations must develop and implement social and economic programmes in a more coordinated and coherent manner. It should consider adopting the recent package of reforms undertaken by the Economic and Social Council. Change in the senior decision-making structure of the Secretariat would be needed. The Organization must take timely, effective and coordinated action to implement the programmes of action adopted at recent global conferences. The international community must move beyond the traditional concept of collective security, which emphasized military security, to a broader perspective of comprehensive security. It must attend not only to political and diplomatic disputes, but to economic underdevelopment, trade disputes and human rights abuses.

Josef Zieleniec, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, stressed that his country played its part in the maintenance of international peace and security. It participated in United Nations operations in the former Yugoslavia, Mozambique, Liberia and Iraq, and sought membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Western European Union. It had also joined the Partnership for Peace and provided humanitarian assistance to stricken countries. The Czech Republic was proud of having a battalion serving with UNPROFOR. Mutual recognition of the States of the former Yugoslavia within their internationally recognized borders was needed.

He stressed that the system for financing peace-keeping operations should be radically reformed to incorporate standard, objective and quantifiable criteria. "In peace-keeping, as in every other aspect of its operations, the United Nations must live within its means", he said. The Czech Republic supported the establishment of an independent body to study the principle of States' capacity to pay. The key factor when considering candidates for permanent membership of the Security Council should be their global influence. They should have the economic, political and military potential to contribute to the maintenance of world security.

Nasser Abdullah Al-Rawdhan, Kuwait's Second Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, said his country supported recent efforts to bring peace

to the Middle East. However, it was convinced that the multilateral formula was doomed to failure unless concrete and significant progress was achieved at the bilateral level. The people of Palestine had suffered unspeakable injustice and deprivation as a result of the loss of their land and the denial of their right to self-determination. Kuwait hoped that they would soon be able to exercise their full rights, including the establishment of their state, the capital of which would be Jerusalem.

The Iraqi regime remained a menace to security and stability in the Middle East, he said. It continued to defy the international community by failing to comply unconditionally with relevant Security Council resolutions. It also refused to address the core issue of recognition of the State of Kuwait and its sovereignty within international borders. Iraq must implement all resolutions relating to its aggression against Kuwait, and accept the boundary demarcation between the two countries. Such acceptance should be formally documented by the Iraqi Revolutionary Command Council and the Iraqi National Council and published in the Iraqi Official Gazette. All those documents should be transmitted to the Security Council and deposited in the records of the United Nations

Jean Ping, Gabon's Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, noted that Africa was currently afflicted by several conflicts. He urged the combatants in Somalia to step up the national reconciliation process and appealed to the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) to take advantage of recent agreements. More participation on the part of the OAU and the United Nations was needed to help end the conflict in Rwanda. The OAU had created a mechanism to deal with conflicts on the basis of preventive diplomacy, while the States of Central Africa had established a standing committee to address confidence-building among States. Those efforts could be enhanced with United Nations support.

The maintenance of international peace and security required development, he continued. The United Nations had undertaken projects to promote sustained economic growth in Africa. However, while the African countries had fulfilled their obligations regarding those initiatives, the industrialized countries had not. Gabon was committed to the major principles of the Agenda for Development, and ways to implement it must be studied. The World Trade Organization must address needs resulting from different levels of development. The industrialized countries should support the efforts of the weakest in the new global economy.

Stephen Kalonzo Musyoka, Kenya's Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, expressed support for efforts to reform the United Nations. While some progress had been made in the economic and social sectors, and in the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, more needed to be done, particularly in the context of the new Agenda for Development. International peace and security could only flourish if peace and stability existed in individual countries. All countries had to build their democracies on the basis of national circumstances, traditions and aspirations, but within the context of universal values and norms of democracy, good governance and human rights.

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The continued presence of United Nations peace-keepers in Somalia was critical, he went on to say. Kenya shared a long border with Somalia, and welcomed international efforts to settle the conflict there. It was greatly concerned at the failure of the faction leaders to use the opportunities afforded by the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II), the OAU and neighbouring countries. An influx of 300,000 Somali refugees into Kenya had had a devastating effect on ecologically fragile parts of the country. He appealed for help in financing the rehabilitation of the infrastructure and the restoration of the ecosystem there. He also requested that UNOSOM II patrols on the Somali side of the border be reinforced.

Mozambican Foreign Minister Pascoal Manuel Mocumbi noted that his country would hold its first multi-party general elections within three weeks. After 16 years of armed conflict, the fact that 6.3 million of an estimated 7.5 million eligible voters had been registered was encouraging. Codes of conduct for the electoral process had been signed by the presidential candidates and the 14 political parties contesting the elections. The elections were the culmination of a long and delicate process of implementing the 1992 General Peace Agreement. The demobilization of forces had been concluded, and the formation of a new army was under way. Meanwhile, the people of Mozambique were looking forward to lasting peace and stability.

The winner of the elections must commit himself to ensuring effective participation by the opposition in the decision-making process, he said. The Government's vision of the future gave a high priority to unity and reconciliation, peace and stability, rehabilitation and development. The international community should pressure the parties to adhere to the Peace Agreement. The role of foreign direct investment and other forms of cooperation with the international business community was critical for the success of national reconstruction. He also appealed to the international community for generous assistance for the mine-clearance programme.

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A 30-member group today left New York for the Dominican Republic as part of the advance team for the United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH). The group comprises 10 military planners, 13 civilian police personnel and seven civilian administrative staff. They will cross the Haitian border tomorrow, in coordination with the multinational force.

There are already 19 members of the UNMIH advance team in Haiti. There is also a small team from the Department of Humanitarian Affairs in the country, as well as 30 personnel from United Nations programmes and agencies.

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